

Culture and Geography of WEST AFRICA



Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Primary Sources: Using Interviews to Discover West Africa



Traditional House Building

INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR BEDE OKIGBO, 82 years

12th June 2007

I remember that when I was growing up, we helped in fetching water for the men who puddle the mud for houses. My cousins and I, both boys and girls fetched water. The older boys and the women carried the mud to the builders. Have you ever seen anyone puddle mud? I said yes. I saw that in Jos, Plateau but not in Igboland. Before a man can do that he must eat good heavy food, for example pounded yam or corn meal, to give him strength. How were the houses built? Well the builders did not measure as they do now. They placed big forked sticks at the four corners of the marked space and proceeded to place the mud on the area. They kept piling the mud on top of each other until it reached about two feet. They would go home and allow the mud clay to dry completely before repeating the process. The roof of the house was made completely on the ground and then raised up and placed on the house. My grandfather's roof was made out of grass. Some people used grass while some used thatch. My father's house was thatch before he changed it into zinc. I am a getting tired now.

Directions: Read the interview and answer the following questions:

1. Who carried the mud to the builders?

2. In your own words, explain how the houses were built.

3. Look up thatch in the dictionary and write the definition:

4. Look up plateau in the dictionary and write the definition:

5. What do you think *puddle mud* is?

6. How is this house different from yours?



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A Child's Day

INTERVIEW WITH MADAM NWANYI IGWE NTE, 90 YEARS
19th July 2007

My father had twelve wives. My father was very wealthy, a chief who had a very big barn. He fostered unity among all in his household. All the wives cooked for the children and all ate together to prevent poisoning. As a young girl my job was to take care of the children when the mothers had gone to the farm, cooked yam for their lunch till their mothers return. As a young girl I swept my mother's compound; mixed cow dung* with water, allowed it to melt then using my hand rubbed it with water on the mud walls to smoothen the walls. Cow dung made the house cool. I did this frequently. After this I would take a bath usually in the stream. I decorated the inside and outside of my mother's hut with chalk and uli [indigo]* We rubbed uli all over our bodies on our thighs, arms, back, stomach, face and neck. You paint your body yourself but got your friends to paint your back and back thighs. We had dancing groups and competitions in the villages especially on moonlight nights. Oh we danced a lot both boys, girls, young men and young women.

Directions: Read the interview and answer the following questions:

1. Madam Nte's father was wealthy because he had a big barn. What else indicated he was a wealthy man? _____

2. What were her chores as a girl? _____

3. How are your chores different from hers? _____

4. What did Madam Nwanyi do for fun as a girl? Do you do the same thing? _____

5. Define *Indigo*. _____

6. Define *Dung*. _____



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Community

Directions: Read the interview and answer the questions on the back.

INTERVIEW WITH SIR JAMES CHIMA OBIEZE, 98 YEARS
28th July 2007

When school was set up here in Onitsha, my grandfather was not convinced that it was something useful. He was not alone in this line of thought. The Onitsha men believed it was very harmful and thus first sent their slaves to school. The idea was that if it was harmful, it will be felt by the slaves and not their children. When they saw that school was beneficial, they now sent us the children. As a child, I went to school and to the farm. My father was a farmer. Every member of the family farmed. We were very busy during the farming season from April to July and during the harvesting from July to November. Children practiced wrestling in the evenings so that we would wrestle for the village. It was a form of exercise and a great sport used to test strength. On moon light nights, the young men and the boys staged wrestling contests. During the dry season we practiced OTU ICHE—[Throwing], a game of throwing oloma ogbe [lemon] to see how many lemons it would take one to hit one's target. Those who became experts at hitting targets got involved in the OTU ICHE masquerade festivities.

Apart from farming we also did fishing; palm wine tapping. We young men fished using fishing basket [iko] and dried the fishes through the process of smoking with fire wood. We drove canoes. We used to swim from Onitsha to Asaba to go and play.

Women worked more than the men. They worked from morning till evening preparing the family meals, fetching water and firewood, sweeping, cleaning and painting the houses and walls with different colors, farming, weeding, harvesting, preserving the excess food for the dry season or the season of scarcity, painting their bodies with uli, fixing their hair, making palm oil and palm kernel oil, going to market etc. We traveled long distance on foot as cars were not in existence then..

Life was very enjoyable. Everybody knew each other's business. We had lots of festivals, masquerades—some of which are no longer in existence. We danced and sang a lot. Every event was an occasion for singing, dancing and merry making. Songs were made out of events that happened in the town. For example Onitsha girls never intermarried with their neighbors, the Igbo. The men intermarried with the Igbo girls. But one Onitsha girl decided to marry an Igbo man named Oli from Oba town and a song of that event was made.



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Community



Directions: Read the interview and answer the questions on the back.

1. Why were slaves used to test the possible harmfulness of school? _____

2. How long was the farming season? _____
3. Why was wrestling considered a good sport? Do you agree or disagree? _____

4. Describe OTU ICHE. _____

OBIEZE COAT OF ARMS

Directions: Based on this interview, draw a coat of arms for Sir Obieze that would represent his childhood. Select four ideas from the reading and create a symbol for each of the four ideas. Example: one symbol might be a lemon

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Pastimes



INTERVIEW WITH OZO* OGBOZO IKE
14th July 2007

Directions: Read the interview and answer the following questions :

*An ozo man was a titled man who achieved his status over time by being a successful yam farmer and community leader. He planted and harvested hundreds yams each season with enough left over to share with the other titled men in his village. An ozo man usually had a number of wives, and numerous children and a large extended family, or lineage. An ozo man was always the head of his own compound, and when he achieved the highest ozo status, he was often the head of his lineage. The members of his lineage came to him to settle their disputes and problems, and depended on him to insure lineage resources were fairly distributed.

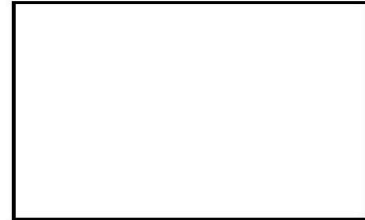
Married women wore a very short cloth. Young girls were not allowed to wear anything other than jigida*. Ogodo was a piece of woven cloth worn by men. There was a custom called the NWADIBE custom in the life of an Ozo man. He secured a young girl who ran errands form him and he was responsible for her welfare. When the girl was of age, she married the man if she so desired or she married someone else. Rich women wore bracelets and anklets but they were not as heavy as the ones presently worn by the Onitsha women. Young girls and young men adorned their bodies. I used to adorn my body with ufie* when I was young. I also wrestled for my compound and my village. We had moonlight dances, plays, wrestling bouts, songs and we stayed out all night doing these things. A rich man had several wives. I have nine wives. Two are dead. I have many children and I have given all of my male children ozo titles.

1. What is an *ozo* man? _____

2. Using a dictionary, define lineage. _____

3. Describe how people of West Africa dressed. How is this different from how you dress? _____

4. If you were asked to adorn your body with red dye (ufie), what would the design look like? Draw the design below:



5. On the back, write two paragraphs comparing and contrasting what you do for entertainment to these young people.

Vocabulary

jigida – beaded belt **ufie** – red-dyed wood
compound - group of family houses



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Reading Comprehension: Discover West Africa



Daily Farm Life of an Igbo Man and his Family

The Daily life of an Igbo man and his household revolve around farm work, especially the *cultivation* of yams, coco yams, corn, groundnuts, and other vegetables. To the Igbo people, yams are the most important crop.

In most parts of Igboland, *preparation* for yam cultivation starts in November and last to March. This time of the year is called the *dry season*. To plant yams, the farmer cuts down the vegetation and burns its on the ground to be planted. Once the first rains begin, the farmer plants his yam crops by building a large mound for each seed yam. This can begin as early as December, and some yams types can be harvested in June or July most must wait until October. After planting, the farmer and his family tend the yam patch. Yams grow a long vine that must be trained to climb a tall stake.

Once the yams are harvested, they are stored in yam barns. These are made by planting saplings of special tree closely together to form an enclosure. The yams are tied to the saplings so they appear to be stacked. This dries and helps preserve them and keeps them where the farmer can see them and know how many he has. The Igbo family will store these yams and use them as needed. Some yams that are not fully matured are kept as seed yams for the next season's planting.

Directions: Using a dictionary, define the following vocabulary:

1. preparation: _____
2. cultivation: _____
3. harvesting: _____
4. crop: _____

Directions: Answer the following short answer questions using complete sentences:

5. When does the Igbo farmer begin preparing his fields? _____
6. What does the farmer and his family have to do to prepare before planting the yams? _____

7. Why do you think the yams are so important to the Igbo people? _____



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Graphing: African Migration to Early America

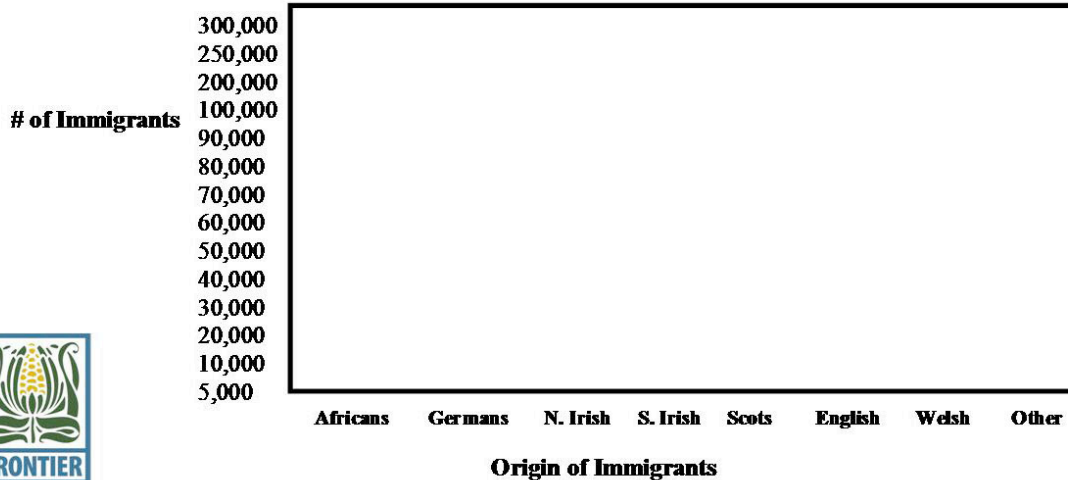


Estimated Immigration by Ethnic Group into Britain's 13 North American Colonies 1700-1775

Source: Aaron Fogelman, "Migrations to the Thirteen British North American Colonies, 1700-1775: New Estimates", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 22 (1992) 691-709.

Africans	278,400
Germans	84,500
Northern Irish	66,100
Southern Irish	42,500
Scots	35,300
English	44,100
Welsh	29,000
Other	5,900

Directions: Using the data above create a bar graph using the information above.



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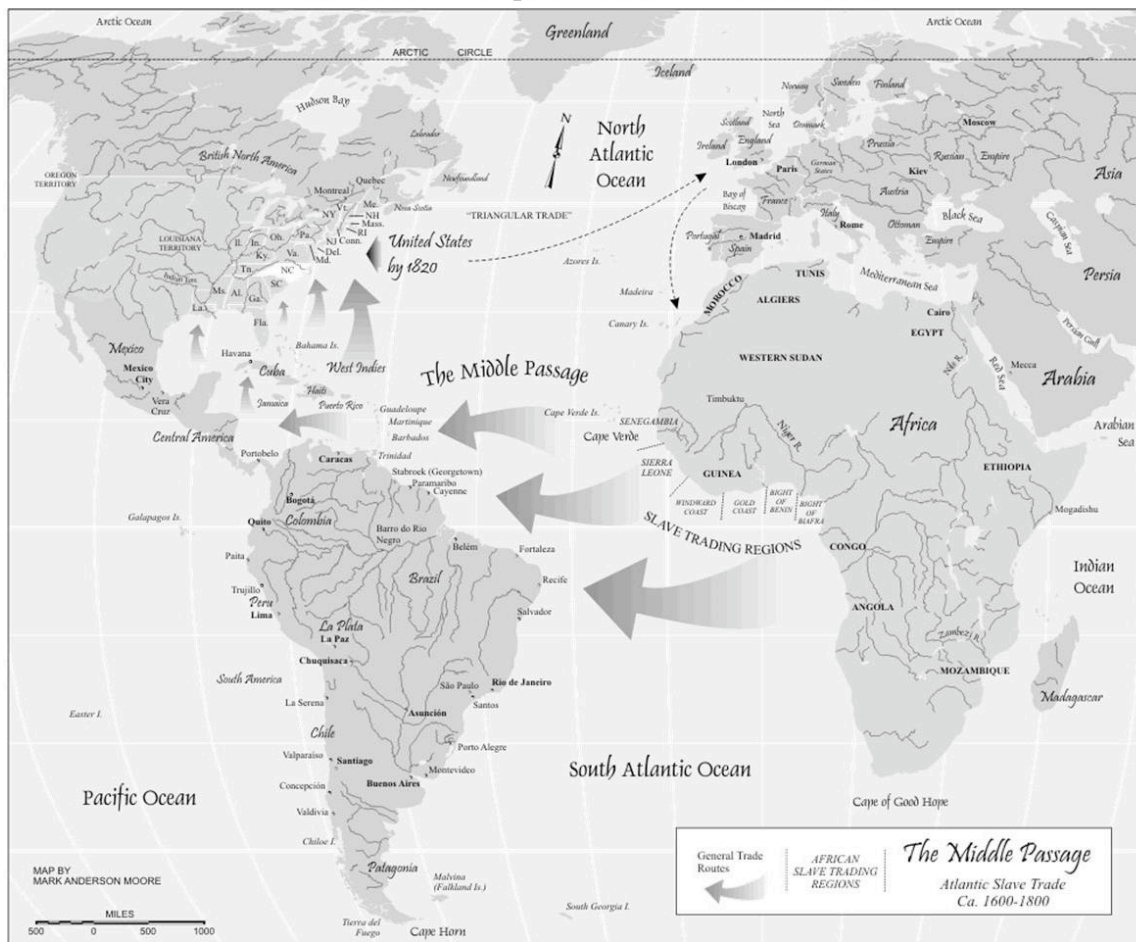


Graphing: African Migration to Early America

Directions: Answer the following short answer questions using the bar graph you created.

1. What is the time period being represented? _____
2. What is the largest immigrant group? _____
3. Why is this group so large? _____

The Middle Passage: North Atlantic Slave Trade



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Directions: Looking at the map, describe the journey that Africans endured to reach the New World.

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Geography: Locating West Africa

Directions: Using an atlas, label each country in West Africa.

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____
5. _____ 6. _____ 7. _____ 8. _____
9. _____ 10. _____ 11. _____ 12. _____
13. _____ 14. _____

Directions: Answer the following questions:

What is the largest country in this region?

14. _____

What is the smallest country in this region?

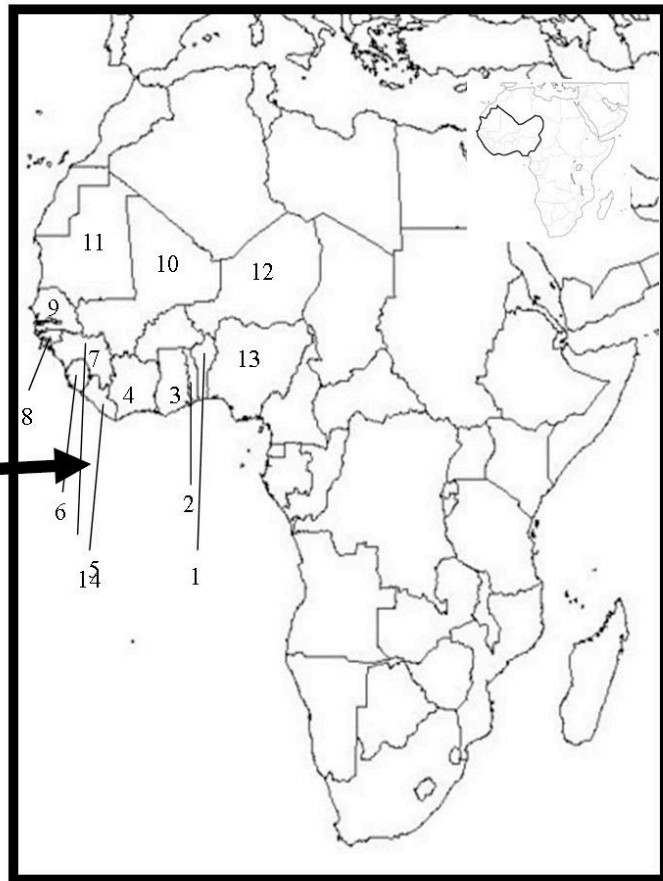
15. _____

What is the name of this body of water?

16. _____

Color all the bodies of water BLUE

Color the West Africa region GREEN



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Geography: Physical Land features of West Africa



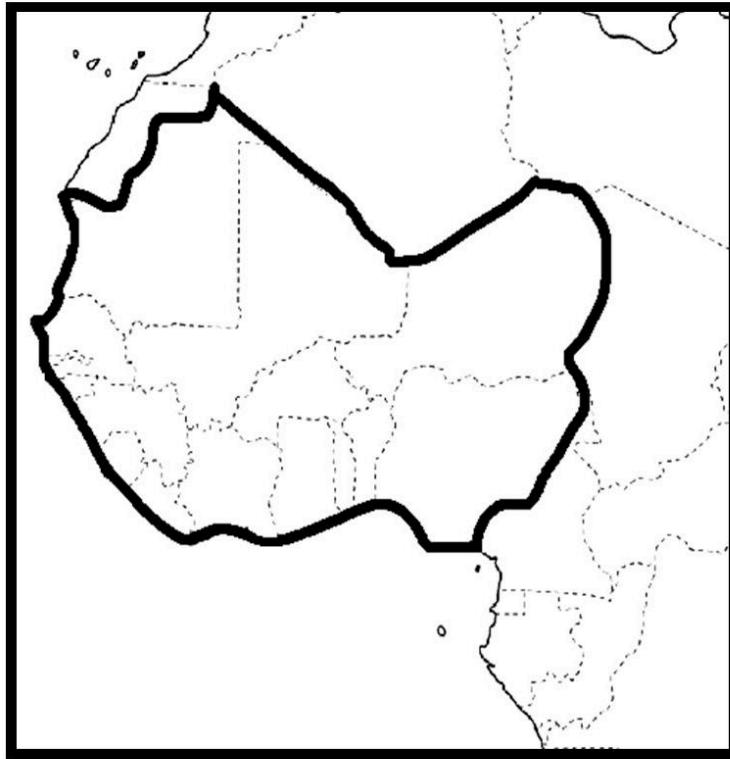
Directions Using an atlas, draw and label the following natural features in west Africa.

Niger River Benue River Lake Chad Atlantic Ocean Senegal River
Gulf of Guinea Shebshi Mountains Mandara Mountains Sahara Desert Gambia River

Color the bodies of water BLUE

Color the mountains BROWN

Color the desert regions YELLOW



Answer the following short answer questions:

1. Name all of the West African countries that the Niger River flows through. _____

2. What is the name of the largest lake in Ghana? _____
3. Name the three countries in West Africa that have desert vegetation in their northern regions.

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Primary Sources: Using Natural Resources



Directions: Answer the following questions:

1. What are natural resources? _____
2. Give an example of a natural resource in your area? _____
3. How is this natural resource used? _____

4. What is a primary source? _____
5. Give two examples of a primary source. _____



Directions: on the back answer the following questions using complete sentences.

1. Using the photographs above, list the available natural resources available to people of West Africa.
2. How are the people of West Africa using their natural resources?
3. Describe what each picture is showing.

